

some of us

by: brian ecklund

Copyright © 2015 by Brian Ecklund

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2015

This book is dedicated to

all of us.

your eyes are inside of me but only so i can see

without headlights

that time we got married

peters place

thursday, august 17th, 2011, sushi palace

i used to think your dad hated me

jordan used to tell me

sad songs while kissing you

i am a happy believer in you

silk boxers

i call you

i saw a stranger that looked like you today

pappardelle

serial killer car a.k.a. “the jones mobile”

insincerity

spring lake

i used to think your mom hated me

antarctica

common threads

your eyes are inside of me but only so i can see

i held onto the metal bar on the bus tightly &
the sweat from thousands of strangers mixed
into the oils on my skin.

i wash it off in your bathroom in downtown philadelphia ‘
& you ask me from the kitchen
why i didn’t respond to your texts or calls
last night.

i tell you that i was tired but the truth is
i was sleeping. i had a dream last night
that fell in love so many times but only knew how
because i fell in love with you first.

because of this i wash my hands off for an extra 4 minutes &
in one of my dreams i almost married a girl who told me that
she wanted to be with my forever or at least as long as i still

loved her back.

i woke up sad but now you’re kissing me
and your hands are sliding on my naked back
& the oil from your skin is mixing in with mine

&

i understand why you love me
only because you taught me
how to understand & do the same.



without headlights

there is dirt under my fingernails because late
last night we made love or something close to it
in a flowerbed that didn't belong to us.

my neighbor suspects it was
"those damn deer again"

my neighbor does not know it was us making love like deer or
something close to it.

i am watching my neighbor from the 2nd story window and
suddenly you are behind me with
your dirty hands draped over my shoulders.

you startle me, i spill a little bit of my coffee
on my desk and we laugh.

i start mimicking a deer,
i lick the coffee off of the desk,
we laugh.

i know we aren't actually deer but when i'm with you
i feel like we could be anything we wanted,
like deer making love in a flowerbed.

maybe one day my neighbor will catch us
making love in his flowerbed. maybe he
won't be mad, maybe he'll just laugh with us,
naked in his flowerbed.

he would probably say something like,
“why are you making love in my flowerbed?”

i'd argue that flowerbeds are a perfect place to make love.
we would argue until the sun came up

& suddenly
we stop talking and he'd pour me
a cup of coffee and the three of us would just

stand there

& we would still be naked
& we would watch the sunrise

as we drank our coffee
like three deer in a field at sunrise.

that time we got married

we didn't actually get married.
there was a ceremony but it was just us
with a 6 pack of beer & you made really strong margaritas that
we drank and got all silly
while watching law & order.

i could feel ourselves getting older.

you cried a little bit but only because that's something you said
you did when you were reminded of how happy life could be.

that time we got married we planned our lives out
during the commercial breaks

& it never seemed serious
but i'm serious when i say,

"i do"

& by the end of the episode
we barely knew what was happening
but i guess that's what it's like
when you get married,

or at least that time we got married
i read out my vows as the credits rolled
and we finished all the beer before the end.

you told me lying was as bad as murder.
i told you i was telling you the truth
and burped & we laughed.

there were no wedding bells
but we got in bed & made love
for what felt like the first time,
but only because tonight was
our first night as a married couple.

we're both tied to the idea
that life is short

but when i woke up
we kissed

and nothing has felt
longer than this.

peters place

i'll tell you about the time i almost had sex
with a girl who looked kind of like
kim kardashian.

kind of like.

you tell me that you've never had sex
with a guy who looked like kanye west

but

that you've had sex with a few guys
who acted like him.

at peters place we always did the same things,
i drank coors light & you smoke weed
with peter & jasmine and whoever else was there
to smoke weed and watch tv with us.

we would sometimes watch reality tv
and laugh at how pathetic most of
the characters were.

we would flip the channels & watch
cooking shows and when you saw the desserts,
you would get this spark in your eye that could only mean we
were going to a diner soon.

when we go to the diner you always ordered pancakes
but you would always steal some of my bacon even though
i always told you i'd buy you a side of bacon

but you always refused which made me angry but it's okay
because i like you
and i don't really mind sharing
all my bacon with you.

by the time we get back to peters place
our eyes are heavy and soft stones
and we sit on the roof while the others
are passed out and i tell you stories about my past i probably
shouldn't share with you.

you say something about how we're kind of like reality show
characters & how we're really just projections of something
else we've seen.

it sounds profound in the moment and we look at the sky and
we're silent for a while but thinking about it now

it's kind of like
you're right.

thursday, august 17th, 2011, sushi palace

remember that sushi place we used to go
every thursday night?
i think it was called sushi palace.

it was the kind of restaurant that from its appearance,
looked like it wasn't good & eating there only confirmed
your suspicions.

there were multiple letters in the sign that were out and the
signs in the window were stained yellow from the sun.
our friends always asked us
why we loved it so much and we'd always laugh and tell them,

"you just need to go"

like there was some great secret that made up
for its shady appearance.

the truth is we've been going for so long the people
at sushi palace expected us every thursday.

they would say

"hello hello welcome welcome!
we have your table right here!"

all while signaling us into the dining room with exaggerated hand motions. the funniest part to me was that sushi palace was owned by a large italian family from the other side of town. we would make up stories about how sushi palace was a front and that they were all part of the mob.

elaborate stories that ended with big shootouts in the tacky dining room.

stories about steamy romantic encounters by the salad bar. do you remember the time you bit into your california roll and found a small screw?

i'm pretty sure they let us eat there for free for a good month after that.

i'll never forget that day in august when we went to go to sushi palace & found out that it was closed for good. we drove by slowly, filled with

sadness & curiosity.

the windows were boarded up and we saw a few cops standing outside. there was police tape and some broken glass by the door.

to this day one of my biggest regrets is not going up to them and asking them what happened there that day at sushi palace.

i guess we will never know.

i used to think your dad hated me

your dad would tell uncomfortable stories at family dinner about college shenanigans and drinking with girls who didn't care about the fact that he liked foreign films.

your mom would get angry and slap his arm and tell him that he was being inappropriate despite the fact we all laughed about it.

we watched a french movie one time about two teenagers who fell in love while on vacation & we both laughed at the awkward sex scenes.

me and your dad would laugh about a lot of stuff but i thought he hated me because when he shook my hand and looked into my eyes, it was like he was trying to warn me.

i remember one time specifically he told us about this one girl who stayed over at his frat house and jumped out of his window on the second floor when her boyfriend came and started slamming on his door.

she sustained a minor fractured in her left leg and your dad felt bad but she said it was okay because her boyfriend never found out, she limped away and hid in a bush until he left.

that one time when we went to the outer banks
for vacation, me and your dad sat on the back porch
late one night after you went to sleep
& we drank whiskey until we were drunk.

he told me that if your mom found out
she'd be really pissed.

he told me that he had a lot of regrets
& i didn't know how to respond.

he told me that he wanted to hate me
but that there were so many ways i reminded him
of himself when he was younger.

he mentioned that though we were
overwhelmingly similar it seemed like i

"wasn't such a shit"
he laughed for a good 5 minutes.

after he stopped laughing he passed out on the porch
in the salty air and i waited for a few minutes
then stumbled inside & fell asleep
on a plastic covered couch.

jordan used to tell me

jordan used to tell me

that if a girl was mean to you
it meant she liked you.

this was back in middle school
but i'm almost 23 now
and i think jordan is still right.

last weekend she told me that
i was a shitty friend after i ditched plans
with my two friends to go see a movie with her.

she was eating popcorn, kernels falling
between her fingers, and laughing at me

in a way that
only girls who know too much about you can.

jordan used to tell me that his older brother
kept a stack of dirty magazines under his bed and sometimes
we would look at them
late at night when he was still out with
his high school friends.

one night he came home a little earlier
and we watched him stumble through the door,
he couldn't walk to straight.

when he saw us hunched over his pile of dirty magazines
he started to laugh uncontrollably

and fell to the floor.

jordan used to tell me that his brother told him
that most girls wanted a guy who was strong
& didn't take any shit from nobody.

i used to think this was true until
you told me you loved me
and meant it

despite the fact i can't bench
more than 65 pounds.

sad songs while kissing you

i used to get pissed off when my records
would skip but now i enjoy the inconsistency.
one of my friends complained to me about
the sound quality of his records
and i had to explain to him
that people didn't listen to records for the quality.

i think about this as we are kissing
while listening to sad songs about leaving.

my neighbor sometimes plays loud jazz early
in the morning and you get mad because
you say the sounds are too hectic and
it gives you a headache.

sometimes i put on records just to hear
the crackle & warm fuzz mix with the room.

you like to open all the windows
during the spring & summer
just to hear the sounds from the busy city street.

i tell you the summer sounds are like jazz to me
but you disagree because you say they make you calm.

when we are together sometimes
we don't talk & these sounds fill the air
and it suddenly becomes okay
that we aren't speaking.

one morning you were helping me button
the cuffs of my dress shirt
when you accidentally pricked your finger on
a pin that was still stuck in the fabric.

your blood stained the blue threads of my shirt
& we rushed to the sink to wash it off.

it was early so it was still kind of dark and
the birds were chirping wildly outside
the windows.

i wrapped a bandage around your finger
and changed my shirt.

we don't really talk about it
but when i hugged you to say goodbye
it didn't seem like you hugged me back.

when i get home you're listening to
"kind of blue" and sleeping

and i don't wake you up until the record stops
and the rain comes through our window.

i am a happy believer in you

it's not blind faith when i can see your hands around my waist
& feel the hot sun on my back.

i know you've been through so much shit
to be here with me so the least i can do
is try to make you happy.

you tell me i don't need to try so hard and that when we sit on
the deck of my beach house that it's enough that i care about
what happens on
the days i don't see you.

you tell me your days at work are long and boring but when you
sleep sometimes your legs twitch and on your face there is a
pained expression
& i can only imagine that you are running.
you don't say much which is okay because
i say a lot even when i know you aren't listening.
one day i told you that it was hard for me
to believe you when i could tell you hurt so bad even when you
said you didn't.

you told me that you were like a bronze statue
& that you just didn't know where you were
put on display yet.

but you knew it was somewhere crowded
& that you were admired
but that it embarrassed you in a way
i couldn't understand.

when you open up to me
and become vulnerable
it makes me feel vulnerable too.

it's not blind faith,
i'm here on the deck of my beach house
and i'm holding your hand and i see you
even though we aren't looking at each other.

you are strong and maybe one day
i'll understand why that scares you.

all i know is you're made from something different
but we are wrapped in a similar cloth.

you said i keep you warm in ways
i don't know how

and that you were only afraid
when i said i knew you.

but i am a happy believer in you,
and i only try to understand.

silk boxers

you laughed at me when i told you i owed a pair
of silk boxers. you made me model them for you
in your dimly lit bedroom.

they were maroon & you said they were sexy
but in a way that wasn't sexy.

i didn't really understand what you meant
but i saw a cheesy movie that inspired me
& the next time we were in bed together
i pulled out a rose and held it between my teeth
as i crawled across the bedsheets
in my maroon silk boxers.

i said i think i know what you mean now.

you laughed at me
& we did it with our socks on.

i call you

i called you last night because i was on the train
and realized i left the better part of my conscious
buried in the sheets of your bed.

i called you when i got off the train because
a woman started crying when she saw
a man standing there waiting for her.
i keep leaving but i call you shortly after
to tell you all the things i wished i had said
when we were together

but instead i was inside you.
pushed together like somehow
you could read my mind that way.

i call you sometimes when i'm laying in bed
and you tell me you're doing the same thing.
i wonder sometimes
if we dream about the same things too.

there's a stop sign at the end of my street
that is covered in so many stickers
that you can barely read the sign
but people still know that it's a stop sign

& they always stop.

when i got off the train to see you
you hugged me and smiled
and i called you lover until you called me too.

i saw a stranger that looked like you today

& yes you are more beautiful
but i don't know her
but i think it's safe to say
she might know me
just by looking at me.
if you smile at enough
everyone assumes you
have something nice to say.

but the truth is she couldn't
be more beautiful but she could be
in a different way.

there is something i don't want
to admit and it has something to do
with the infinite possibilities of
our limitless universe.

maybe one day you'll fall out of love with me
and it'll take me a while to start smiling again
but when i finally can
i'll see someone on the street
who knows me just by looking at me.

it's beautiful how you can
look at things,
or not look at things,
but still know you
haven't seen it all.



pappardelle

we eat fresh pappardelle with porcini mushrooms
& veal in silence while i think about
how crazy it is how for anyone to be
eating pappardelle in silence.
but we are young
and don't quite know the rules yet.
but we are young and didn't even know
what pappardelle was until we wandered
into the italian market by accident
a few weeks ago.

it was hot so we only held hands in short
intervals or until our hands got too sweaty
and slipped apart.

there are things we are still discovering
about each other. you asked me what my favorite kind of pasta
was and i said "pappardelle" because it was the first thing i saw
scribbled on a sign
in one of the store windows.
i guess there are things
i still don't know about myself.

you say your favorite pasta is elbow macaroni
& i believe you.

we walk into the store and it's colder
than what you'd expect a store
that sells fresh pasta to be.

you turn to me and shiver
& open your eyes wide
and we wait in line and talk about
the ideal temperature for sleeping.

i buy a few pounds of pappardelle and we buy some
homemade sauce, which the girl behind
the counter refers to as "gravy" and says it'll,

"make you think you are in heaven"

we laugh about this statement for a few minutes
after we leave the store & i make a joke about
being in heaven already
when i'm with you.

serial killer car

a.k.a.
'the jones mobile'

you still drive the same car you had in high school.
a dirty old station wagon that looks like
a car a criminal would drive.

when you would pick me up,
you'd pull into the driveway too fast
and parts of the cars wood paneling
would flap violently and smack against
the sides of the car.

you always made a loud entrance.

i would hop in and no matter what, a musty smell
would be present.

in the summer we would drive around
with the windows down
because if you turned on the air conditioning,

the smell of wet dog would fill the cars interior.

without the air conditioning,
we would sweat so much
our shirts would stick to the maroon leather seats
and at night it would cool down
and your windows would fog
when we sat in my driveway,
leaned over the gearshift,

kissing.

the first time you picked me up in your car
i made a joke about how it looked like
a car a serial killer would drive.

you didn't laugh at first, instead, you lowered your
sunglasses and told me,

**“it’s called...
the jones mobile”**

we laughed for at least 12 minutes.

insincerity

i will look into the eyes of it
but only if you are behind them.
there is a wall i tried to climb even though
i couldn't see the top of it,
i found it in your mouth.

you would never tell me how it got there,
or even why you thought it was there,
it was just there.

no matter how many times i tried to climb it,
you spoke to me through it and your words
were muffled and warm.

after a few years, your words wore a tiny hole
and i finally started to understand.

when i put my mouth on your mouth
you escape for a moment
and i know you are sincere
then because you are no longer
hurting trying to tell me.

i want to look into your eyes but only if you
aren't hiding behind them.
putting your breath into me
and you put your head on my chest
like you are trying to listen to your words
mix together inside of me.

i would never lie to you about what i want,
i could only forget
what it's like to have you behind your eyes
with your heart inside of me.

i know you would never lie,
i know it's just that you don't think
i could ever know.

spring lake

there is a lake in canada that i kissed you in
even though i couldn't see the bottom.

we jumped in after hiking for an hour and
your long hair spread out on the surface
as you floated on your back.

that day the sun came in at long angles and
when the clouds passed by you could see streaks break into
the cool, deep water.

you were worried that your parents would be mad,
we didn't tell them we left to go explore.
we left our phones back at the cabin just to see if we could
ignore the internet for a little while.

you told me that i should write a poem about jumping into a
lake and becoming a part of it.
i told you i liked to be more literal in my writing
but that sometimes i actually felt that way.

we talked about thoreau's walden
and we both decided that we both rarely recognized when the
world inspired us.

we have a quick conversation about bugs
and we both agree that they are annoying
but that the world needs them.

when we got home your parents were mad
but they said it was okay because they were happy to see
that we were enjoying

“the beautiful scenery”

after they went to sleep
we drank a few beers on the porch
and talked about our favorite woodland creatures.

we both agreed that skunks are probably misunderstood and
probably
very embarrassed by their smell.

you say it's depressing how removed we are from places like
this back in the city but then
the sun started to fall into the trees and there were so many
unfamiliar sounds that filled
our ears.

they mixed together and you rested your head on my shoulder
as we sat on our shirts at the edge of the water.

we wondered if animals could really be
that self aware.

you brought up some article you read online
but i don't believe it and i tell you that i question
most things i see on the internet.

it's then that we realize we haven't checked our phones since
we got back a few hours ago.

you say to me in a silly deep voice,

“i didn't even get to post a photo of the lake...
it's like we were never there.”

we laugh and open another beer.

i used to think your mom hated me

she would make iced tea in the summertime
and mulled wine in the winter. your mom loved wine but only
drank more than one glass on holidays and when she couldn't
sleep.

you told me a few times that she thought i was
well mannered but that i lacked ambition like
"most men my age". i was a little offended by this but then i
looked down at my shoes and saw my big toe poking out of a
hole, i laughed.

she is the type of person who values tradition
& always told me i'd make a great politician.
i always was a little offended by this but i rolled with it. she
would laugh at my barack obama impressions but i could tell
that she hated them at the same time.

i couldn't tell if your mom was
a republican or a democrat
but one time at dinner she made a comment about welfare and
iphones
and i think i offended her when i said

something like,
"it's all relative"

we went to the mall once
and she bought me a bowtie
because she thought i would look good
in a bowtie

but i never wore it which ended up being
a huge fight between us.

“why can’t you just wear the damn bowtie?”
you said to me.

this pissed your mom off the most
because your dad liked to be stubborn as well.

your mom would get sad during christmas time and i never
noticed until one day in late december she fell down in the
living room because she was drunk.

you told me that when she was younger she had a brother who
died two days before christmas and i asked why i had never
heard about him and you said that it was because your family
never talked about it.

one time i hugged her and told her that my aunt wore the same
perfume and that i loved it and instead of being happy about
my compliment
she looked at me with a half smile like she was annoyed that i
would compare her to anyone else.
the perfume smelled like lavender.

i used to think your mom hated me because
when she would look at me she would smile but
in a way that wasn’t quite smiling.

one time she told me that she didn’t “get art”
and thought that the whole scene was pretentious and fake but
she confessed that she saw a few impressionist paintings once
that made her cry.

she said she thought that crying because of a few paintings was embarrassing so she left the museum and waited for your family outside.

i used to think she hated me because i wasn't the type of person she wanted her daughter to date but these days i'm not as convinced

that it's about me at all.



antarctica

there are winter months that happen each year and they don't apologize for themselves.

summer ends, fall comes, and winter just climbs through your window.

we drive down the main road that connects the small towns that surround our small town and we talk about how weird it is that there are christmas decorations up when it's only october 4th.

we count the big snowflakes hanging from the light posts as we drive by. 24, 25, 26, 27, i interject, 5 million 2 hundred thousand & 84

and ruin your count.

you poke my side and i tell you
(in a mocking dad-like tone)

"you know, it's dangerous to mess around with someone who is operating a motor vehicle!"

you call me an idiot and i pull into a parking spot.

we talk about antarctica as we eat indian food
& you tell me that your dad saw the aurora borealis once and he told you that
it changed his life.

we both agree we love the repetitive nature of things, of pop music, of our dates to go eat indian food, the seasons, of the plans we make.

i try to think about the most beautiful thing i've ever seen for ~25 seconds but i give up and say that you are the most beautiful thing i've ever seen & you let out a long groan and drop the piece of naan bread you were holding onto your plate.

you say something about my jokes being too predictable and i agree with you but i tell you if i had to choose between seeing the aurora borealis and seeing you i'd probably choose to see you.

i tell you i want to go to antarctica with you someday to see the aurora borealis and you say okay but just as long as "i stopped being so corny".

on the drive home we listen to the radio & we both agree that we hate the radio.

you tell me that in 2010 your sister sang "teenage dream" by katy perry every day of fall until snow first hit the ground.

we sing "teenage dream" together acappella and start laughing. "it's a great song" i say. you agree.

we both agree we love the repetitive nature of things, of pop music, of our dates to go eat indian food, the seasons, of the plans we make.

i put the windows down because you say you are hot and cool air flows through the windows & we can hear the frail leaves crack underneath my tires as i drive through piles that line the edges of the street.

we count until we get home.

1,2,3,4,

5,6,7,8,9,10,

11,12,

13,14,

15,16,17,

18,

19,20

,21,

22



common threads

you wore my sweater and i wore your sweater
and we took them off and then put them back
on again.

yours was woven with threads of various
muted colors, mine a single shade of dark blue.

we sit on the floor of your room and it's cold
but your feet are warm in some thick wool socks
and they scratch as you brush them against
my leg.

you tell me the best sweaters are the ones that
are second hand. you are wearing an oversized wool sweater
that you claim belonged to

'somebody's grandpa at one time'
i don't know where you got it.

it's october and we are warm together,
two jackets pressed together waiting for
a bus to take us to your friends house
in west philadelphia.

i am holding a bag,
two six packs and
you unscrew the lid of your flask
and we get warmer together.

later that night we are under thick blankets
and we whisper to each other like the world
we created underneath our sheets is delicate,
the air hot and full of our breath.

we wake up and you put on my sweater
and i put on your sweater and we are together
in october air.

your bedroom window open, we can hear
the leaves cracking as the wind passes
through it.

and you whisper to me,

“goodmorning”
and it goes right into me.

i could sit with you for a long time.
unraveling, slowly becoming something new
to be woven back together.
to pass on,
to cover me as someone new.

about the author

Brian Ecklund is a
poet, designer, photographer, lover, & friend
who lives outside of Philadelphia, PA.

you can reach him by e-mail at
brianecklund@gmail.com

or become friends with him here:
<https://www.facebook.com/brian.ecklund.5>

www.somepoetrybybrianecklund.com



